

# Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP  
Premier



Monday, 12 February 2024

## HEAD START IS HELPING MORE STUDENTS EARN THEIR WINGS

More students will get the skills they need and walk straight into the jobs they want, thanks to the expansion of an Allan Labor Government program allowing students to finish Year 12 while pursuing paid training.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Education Ben Carroll today visited Interair at Essendon Airport to announce that every student at a government secondary school can now participate in *Head Start*.

Head Start is a nation-leading program that gives students who are eager to enter the workforce the opportunity to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship while finishing school.

Completed alongside a VCE, VCE Vocational Major or Victorian Pathways Certificate, the initiative offers students paid on-the-job training while providing employers with well-matched and highly motivated young workers.

Interair is one of the many companies offering students apprenticeships while they finish VCE. Last year, Interair took on Sunbury Downs College graduate William Paul for two days a week – allowing him to become the first student in Victoria to undertake aircraft maintenance as a school-based apprenticeship through Head Start.

Last year, 288 schools had at least one student start a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, with the most popular choices being carpentry, hospitality and electrotechnology.

More than 3300 students participated in Head Start in 2023, which carefully matched them with employers to deliver a successful and rewarding placement for everyone.

Head Start students get ongoing support from the Head Start team through Year 11 and 12, helping them to manage the demands of work, school and training.

Nearly 3,000 employers have hosted a Head Start school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. 96 per cent of participating employers with fewer than 20 employees say they would recommend the program.

The program is showing great results to date, with the apprentice and trainee retention rate at 87 per cent – significantly higher than the rate for full time apprentices and trainees of 54 per cent.

The expansion of Head Start to all government secondary schools following the successful pilot is part of the Labor Government's \$639 million investment in reforms to senior secondary pathways. To find out more about Head Start, including how to provide an employment opportunity, visit [apprenticeships.vic.gov.au/head-start](https://apprenticeships.vic.gov.au/head-start).

### Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

*"Tradies are in high demand, and this means more workers for the jobs our state needs."*

*"Young people shouldn't have to choose between finishing their studies and pursuing paid training."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

*"Head Start is a great option for students, allowing them to complete Year 12 while getting paid and working towards a qualification that will set them up for their future."*

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